

REMARKS

Claims 19-41 are pending in the application.

Restriction Requirement

The office Action asserts that the application contains the following groups of inventions which are not linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.

Moreover, in accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.499, Applicants are required to elect a single invention to which the claims will be restricted.

Group I. Claims 19-28, drawn to ceramic multi-layer filter.

Group II. Claims 29-41, drawn to process of making ceramic filter.

The requirement asserts that the groups of invention lack the same or corresponding special technical features because the special technical feature of claim 19 is "ceramic multi-layer filter" which is asserted to be shown by DE 195 12 146 A to lack novelty or inventive step, and does not define a contribution over the prior art.

Election

In order to be responsive to the requirement for restriction, Applicant elects the invention set forth in Group I, claims 19-28, with traverse.

Traverse

Notwithstanding the election of the claims of Group I in order to be responsive to the Restriction Requirement, Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's requirement for restriction.

The Examiner is reminded that in determining unity of invention, the criteria set forth in 37 C.F.R. 1.475 must be considered. Specifically, Applicants note that 37 C.F.R. 1.475 provides:

Unity of invention before the International Searching Authority, the International Preliminary Examining Authority, and during the national stage.

(a) An international and a national stage application shall relate to one invention only or to a group of inventions so linked as to form a single general inventive concept ("requirement of unity of invention"). Where a group of inventions is claimed in an application, the requirement of unity of invention shall be fulfilled only when there is a technical relationship among those inventions involving one or more of the same or corresponding special technical features. The expression "special technical features" shall mean those technical features that define a contribution which each of the claimed inventions, considered as a whole, makes over the prior art.

(b) An international or a national stage application containing claims to different categories of invention will be considered to have unity of invention if the claims are drawn only to one of the following combinations of categories:

- (1) A product and a process specially adapted for the manufacture of said product; or
- (2) A product and process of use of said product; or
- (3) A product, a process specially adapted for the manufacture of the said product, and a use of the said product; or
- (4) A process and an apparatus or means specifically designed for carrying out the said process; or
- (5) A product, a process specially adapted for the manufacture of the said product, and an apparatus or means specifically designed for carrying out the said process.

(c) If an application contains claims to more or less than one of the combinations of categories of invention set forth in paragraph (b) of this section, unity of invention might not be present.

(d) If multiple products, processes of manufacture, or uses are claimed, the first invention of the category first mentioned in the claims of the application and the first

recited invention of each of the other categories related thereto will be considered as the main invention in the claims, see PCT Article 17(3)(a) and § 1.476(c).

(e) The determination whether a group of inventions is so linked as to form a single general inventive concept shall be made without regard to whether the inventions are claimed in separate claims or as alternatives within a single claim.

Applicants point out that in determining unity of invention the criteria set forth in 37 C.F.R. 1.475 must be considered. Thus, in stating the restriction requirement, the requirement must state why unity of invention is lacking at least under 1.475(a) and (b). Therefore, the restriction requirement is improper for not discussing the various sections of 1.475.

Moreover, 1.475(b)(1) states that an international or a national stage application containing claims to different categories of invention will be considered to have unity of invention if the claims are drawn to a product and a process specially adapted for the manufacture of said product. In the instant situation, independent claim 19 in Group I is directed to a ceramic multi-layer filter. Moreover, claim 29 is directed to a process for producing a ceramic multi-layer filter. **Accordingly, it is readily evident that the claims of Groups I and II satisfy unity of invention in accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.475.**

Regarding the asserted potential lack of novelty or inventive step, Applicants reserve their right to contest any such assertion of lack of novelty or inventive step when such an assertion is actually made and reasons for such holding set forth. In this regard, Applicants note that even if the restriction requirement is maintained, upon allowance of the claims of Group I, the claims of Groups II should be rejoined and allowed.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner seriously reconsider the requirement for restriction, and withdraw the same so as to give an examination on

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the merits on all of the claims pending in this application. In any event, the claims should be rejoined upon allowance of the elected claims.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons discussed above, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's requirement for restriction is improper and should be withdrawn.

Withdrawal of the requirement for the restriction with the examination of all claims pending in this application is respectfully requested.

Favorable consideration with early allowance of the pending claims is most earnestly requested.

If the Examiner has any questions, or wishes to discuss this matter, please call the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,
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